

Applicant : Forstall et al.
Serial No. : 10/602,335
Filed : June 23, 2003
Page : 10 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 18962-034001 / P3193US1

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 5 and replaces the original sheet including Fig. 5.

In Figure 5, reference numbers 516, 526 and 528 have been added to correspond with paragraph 23 of the specification.

Attachments following last page of this Amendment:

Replacement Sheet (1 page)
Annotated Sheet Showing Change(s) (1 page)

REMARKS

Claims 2, 4-16, and 18-39 are currently pending, of which claims 2, 18, 36, and 38 are independent. Claims 2, 8, 11, 13-16, 18-19, and 21-38 are currently amended. Claims 40-42 are added. Claim 20 is cancelled. Reconsideration of the action mailed September 8, 2005, is requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The Examiner rejected claims 2, 4-16, 18-32, and 35-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication 2003/0167310 to Moody et al. (hereinafter "Moody"). The Examiner rejected claims 33-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Moody. The Applicant traverses the rejections.

Section 102 Rejections

Claim 2 stands rejected over Moody. Claim 2 is directed to a system for threading e-mail messages that includes creating an e-mail thread if a first e-mail message is determined to be related to a second e-mail message. The e-mail thread includes a thread header that has information derived from attributes of at least one of the e-mail messages in the e-mail thread. Information about received e-mail messages is displayed in a user interface. The thread header information is displayed in the user interface while the information for each e-mail associated with the thread is not displayed.

Moody discloses a number of techniques for categorizing e-mail messages. *See Abstract.* In Moody, a technique is disclosed where e-mail threads are provided. Each received e-mail message is associated with a shadow document. *See paragraph 64.* The shadow document defines parent/child relationships for the e-mail message. *See paragraphs 64-65 and 68.* A conversation thread tree is derived by traversing the existing shadow documents and examining the parent/child relationships. *See paragraphs 67 and 70.*

The conversation thread is disclosed as displayed graphically as a hierarchy of related e-mail messages. *See paragraph 74; FIG.6A.* Alternatively, Moody discloses an email inbox where the selection of an email results in the display highlighting other messages presented in

the inbox that are within the conversation thread (e.g., with a particular color). *See* paragraph 102; FIG. 9.

Moody does not disclose or suggest determining whether first and second e-mail messages are related before creating an e-mail thread. Instead, when a message is selected, Moody creates a thread for the message and then traverses the shadow documents to determine what messages are members of the thread. *See* paragraph 71. Thus, a thread can include only a single message if there are not other related e-mail messages because the thread is generated prior to determining related messages.

Additionally, Moody does not create a thread header including information derived from attributes of at least one of the first or second e-mail messages. The Examiner states that the shadow document is the thread header. Applicant respectfully disagrees. As discussed above, a shadow document is created for each individually received message and includes data associated with that message. The shadow document, however, is not a thread. A thread is generated by examining all of the shadow documents for related documents. However, Moody does not disclose or suggest creating a thread header according to this examination where the thread header includes information derived from attributes of at least one of the first or second e-mail message.

Furthermore, Moody does not disclose or suggest displaying thread header information to the user in place of the information for each associated e-mail. Moody, in contrast, does the opposite. Each display of the conversation thread includes presenting all of the e-mail messages of the thread to the user instead of any thread header information. Moody does not disclose or suggest displaying thread header information, derived from attributes of at least one of the threaded e-mail messages, and not displaying information associated with each thread e-mail message. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 2, as well as claims 8-12 and 35, which depend from claim 2, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 7 stands rejected over Moody. Claim 7 is directed to a thread header that includes a time that the e-mail thread was most recently updated. The Examiner states that Moody discloses the thread header of claim 7 at paragraph 66. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Paragraph 66 discloses metadata included with a generated shadow document. The metadata includes "sender, receiver, original size, subject, date, any carbon copy recipients, etc. associated

with the document.” *See* paragraph 66. Thus, the date refers to information regarding a specific e-mail message from which the shadow document was generated. The metadata can then be parsed by an application to generate a document summary. *See* paragraph 66.

As discussed above, Moody does not disclose or suggest creating a thread header. Additionally, paragraph 66 does not disclose or suggest that the date includes the time in which the e-mail thread was most recently updated. Paragraph 66 refers to a single shadow document generated from a received e-mail message. The shadow document is not an e-mail thread itself, but a component of an e-mail thread. Paragraph 66 does not disclose or suggest any updating step for any data. Furthermore, paragraph 66 does not disclose or suggest updating a date associated with an existing shadow document identifying when the e-mail thread was most recently updated. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 7 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 18 stands rejected over Moody. Claim 18 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages that includes displaying the thread header information in a user interface where the thread header information is displayed in lieu of the information for each e-mail associated with the thread. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, claim 18 as well as claims 4-7 and 19-34, which depend from claim 18, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 23 stands rejected over Moody. Claim 23 is directed to a method of threading e-mails where each sender of an e-mail has an associated priority and the displayed header information includes a color associated with the e-mail sender having the highest priority. The Examiner states that Moody discloses displaying thread header information in a color associated with a sender having a highest priority at paragraphs 109-111. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Paragraphs 109-111 disclose sorting email messages in an inbox based on different categories including priority types such as “approvals” and “urgent mail”. *See* paragraph 109. However, this message sorting by priority disclosed in this section of Moody is not related to e-mail threading. Instead, all messages in an inbox are sorted by priority according to one or more algorithms. *See* paragraph 110. The cited paragraphs do not disclose or suggest using priority information in the context of an e-mail thread. Furthermore, the cited paragraphs do not disclose or suggest displaying thread header information including a color representing the sender of an e-mail in the thread having the highest priority. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 23 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 36 stands rejected over Moody. Claim 36 is directed to a computer program product for threading e-mail messages that includes displaying the thread header information in a user interface where the thread header information is displayed and where the information for each e-mail associated with the thread is not displayed. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, claim 36 as well as claim 13-16 and 37, which depend from claim 36, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 38 stands rejected over Moody. Claim 38 is directed to a system for threading e-mail messages that includes a display means operable to display information about received e-mail messages in a user interface where the thread header information is displayed and the information for each e-mail associated with the thread is not displayed. For at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, claim 38 as well as claim 39, which depends from claim 38, are in condition for allowance.

New Claims

Claims 40-42 are added. Claim 40 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages that includes creating an e-mail thread having a thread header and displaying the thread header. For at least the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, claim 40 as well as claim 41, which depends from claim 40, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 42 is directed to a method for threading e-mail messages that includes displaying a display item indicating a nature of the relationship between the first e-mail message and the second e-mail message. Moody does not disclose or suggest threading an e-mail message including displaying a display item indicating a nature of the relationship between the first e-mail message and the second e-mail message. Applicant submits that claim 42 is also in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully requests that all pending claims be allowed.

Applicant : Forstall et al.
Serial No. : 10/602,335
Filed : June 23, 2003
Page : 15 of 15

Attorney's Docket No.: 18962-034001 / P3193US1

Please charge \$500 for excess claims to deposit account 06-1050. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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Annotated Drawing Sheet Showing Changes

Application No.: 10/602,335
THREADED PRESENTATION OF ELECTRONIC MAIL
Inventor(s): Scott Forstall, et al.
Atty. Docket No.: 18962-034001
Sheet: 4 of 9

FIG. 5